

TRANSGENDER AWARENESS WEEK AND TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I am proud to be a steadfast ally of the LGBT community. This week is Transgender Awareness Week, during which we seek to raise the visibility of transgender and gender nonconforming people and to bring awareness to the issues this community faces, from prejudice and discrimination to acts of violence that have claimed too many lives.

Eighteen years ago, Rita Hester, an African-American transgender woman was murdered in Boston, MA. Rita's death ignited fear in the transgender community. Her murder also sparked the founding of the Transgender Day of Remembrance. On November 20, we remember Rita and the all too many transgender individuals who have lost their lives to hate-based violence.

Sadly, the fear that the transgender community feels has not subsided in the last 18 years. For the transgender community, and even more so for transgender women of color, the fear of violence is still all too real. In 2015, at least 21 transgender individuals in the United States were victims of fatal violence. This year, we have already reached that same number of transgender deaths attributable to violence, reflecting more such deaths than in any other year in which advocates have kept records. This is both sad-den and maddening.

Too many of these victims' stories go untold, but through the Transgender Day of Remembrance, many of these individuals silenced by violence get a small voice. This day is a reminder that no person's life is worth less than another's because of who they are or whom they love. We must continue to do all we can to stop the marginalization of the transgender community, to stop the discrimination, and to stop the violence.

In 2009, President Obama signed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act. It was the first Federal law to provide civil rights protections for transgender people, and it was a step in the right direction. But it has not been enough to stop the ongoing discrimination and violence against the transgender community.

We still have work to do and need as many voices as possible convey that message. This week in particular, but every week as well, we must remember all the transgender individuals who have lost their lives to violence at home and abroad and continue to work towards a more inclusive society, free of violence and discrimination.

HONORING MICHAEL G. SAURO

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator JAMES LANKFORD and myself, it is my honor to pay tribute to the life and sacrifice of Department of Army civilian employee Michael G.

Sauro who died 1 day after his 40th birthday on October 19, 2016, of wounds received from encountering hostile enemy fire near Kabul, Afghanistan.

The son of Michael and Christine Sauro, Mike was born on October 18, 1976 in Chambersburg, PA. He graduated from Savanna High School in Savanna, IL, and went on to graduate with his bachelor's degree from Illinois State University in Normal, IL.

"Whether it be sports, or his friends, or his family, he always went at it 100 percent," recalled a fellow Savanna High School graduate, "He was very committed to the U.S. and service members, making sure they had what they needed to do their job." He was passionate about life and was always willing to step in and help. His infectious smile will be remembered by everyone that knew and loved Mike.

Mike began his Federal civilian service in December of 1999 and spent his career working for the Defense Ammunition Center, McAlester Army Ammunition Plant in McAlester, OK, and at its satellite locations at Fort Riley, KS, and Schofield Barracks, HI.

While at McAlester Army Ammunition Plant, he led the effort and was instrumental in revisions of the hazardous materials course. He worked to deliver the most robust training course available at over 50 locations in and outside the continental United States. Mike was the liaison between McAlester Army Ammunition Plant and the satellite training locations helping to ensure that the mission was accomplished. McAlester Army Ammunition Plant coworkers fondly remember him for his "sunny disposition as well as his genuine kindness."

Mission always came first for Mike. Regardless of the complexity of the task, he quickly comprehended requirements of the task and aggressively accomplished them in a professional, timely manner. He deployed three times—the first time in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the second in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, and the third to support the mission to train, advise and assist Afghan forces. Mike's dedicated service and expertise made a difference around the world and saved lives. He is a testament to the values of the Defense Ammunition Center, the U.S. Army Combined Services Command, the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, and the U.S. Army.

Mike is survived by his parents Michael and Christine Sauro, his brother and sister-in-law Ben and Sarah Sauro, his sister and his brother-in-law Brienne and Lance Matthews, and their children, Dakota and William.

Today we remember Michael G. Sauro, an American hero who gave his all for his country. Our Nation lost a great American, son, grandson, brother, uncle, and friend. Mike's service and sacrifice will never be forgotten.

TRIBUTE TO CHRIS AHMUTY

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Chris Ahmuty as he retires from the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin after 24 years of advocacy and leadership. Since 1992, Chris has dedicated his professional and personal life to creating a stronger and more equal Wisconsin.

Chris was born in New York City and spent his childhood and adolescent years in Derby, NY. Growing up, Chris's grandfather, Frederic P. Lee, played a significant role in shaping his future. Based in Washington, Frederic was an active contributor to the political reform movement in Montgomery County, MD, throughout the 1940s and 1950s. Frederic's commitment to public service and family values had a tremendous impact on Chris, eventually leading him into a career in advocacy.

Chris's career with the ACLU did not begin with a full time job, but rather a volunteer position. After moving to Milwaukee to attend graduate school, Chris held a variety of jobs, including a position at the Milwaukee County Historical Society. However, following in his grandfather's political footsteps, he began to spend his free time volunteering for the ACLU. Soon after, in 1982, he became the executive assistant to the ACLU Wisconsin executive director, Eunice Edgar.

Founded in 1920, the American Civil Liberties Union continues its mission to preserve individual rights and liberties. Since becoming executive director of the Wisconsin chapter in 1992, Chris has personally embodied this mission both in his work and in the community.

Over the course of his tenure, the Wisconsin chapter has grown from 4 full-time employees to 12, including 2 full-time staff attorneys. According to those who work most closely with him, Chris's leadership style is rooted in his familial values and strong belief in the importance of civil liberties. He recognizes that change will not occur over a single day or week, but over a long period of time with the help of perseverance, patience, and a strong will. Chris is a staunch advocate who has fought to end racial segregation in schools, uphold a woman's right to choose, and preserve every individual's First Amendment rights. Under his leadership, ACLU Wisconsin also fought hard to challenge the State's voter ID laws, which threaten to disenfranchise or discourage Wisconsin voters. Chris has spent his career giving a voice to those who might otherwise not be heard.

Chris's commitment to the people of Wisconsin goes beyond the impact he has had at the ACLU. He has served on advisory committees for the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance and on the Legal and Policy Committee of the Wisconsin Relay of Electronic Data, helping develop privacy standards for Wisconsin healthcare. Lastly, Chris has served on the board of the Milwaukee Turners for over 10 years as a way of honoring his German heritage and